

Animal Resources Team Newsletter

May, 1999

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This newsletter is the first publicized effort by the NIH Animal Resources Team (ART) – also known as the **Disaster Planning Animal Advisory Committee (DPAAC)** - to keep animal program personnel abreast on the development of the trans-NIH disaster response plan, particularly with regard to animal care during facility emergencies. It is intended to provide current information on disaster preparedness.

The **NIH Continuity of Operations Plan (NIH COOP)** is a trans-NIH disaster response plan designed to mitigate any emergency affecting the NIH community at either the Bethesda or Poolesville campuses, and facilitate a return to active research as soon as practicable. The **NIH Animal Resources Team (ART)** is a separate, but integral partner within the NIH COOP, and will respond, in whole or in part, to any disaster/emergency whenever resources or circumstances do not permit an effective or adequate response by the affected IC.

The NIH ART is composed of volunteers from the various institutes. Each Animal Program Director has also designated an IC specific ART responsible for assisting them in the development and implementation of an IC disaster preparedness plan for their animal program. Each member of the NIH ART has been designated as a liaison for one or more ICs, and is responsible for assisting the IC ART in the development of their emergency response plans.

The NIH ART has surpassed all other components of the NIH COOP in developing an Emergency Handbook (now available in draft form) to assist each IC in crafting their own animal related emergency response plan documents. Although the Handbook will not be available in final form prior to the NIH AAALAC Site Visit this July, the DPAAC will ensure each IC ART receives updated draft versions as they become available.

The Office of Animal Care and Use anticipates the submission of draft IC Disaster Plans from Animal Program Directors during the latter part of May. Note that for the AAALAC site visit, each IC should have both the ART Emergency Handbook, and a copy of their own IC specific disaster/emergency response plan available for the site visitors.

As mentioned above, each IC should have already initiated development of a disaster plan. The ART Emergency Handbook is designed to serve as a generic template for the IC plan; it should be considered a single source document that encompasses the essential elements to consider when designing and implementing an effective IC specific disaster/emergency response plan. However, there is presently no requirement to follow the exact format of the NIH ART draft document. The objective is to have a workable plan in place as soon as possible, and to ensure personnel are appropriately trained for facility emergencies.

REMINDERS

One goal of the DPAAC is to keep the animal program community informed of upcoming issues and events on disaster preparedness, and to provide useful input that will enable each IC to meet their preparedness and training goals. Ideally, one should be planning and preparing six months in advance of anticipated or potential problems. Listed below are several areas of concern that warrant timely attention:

- ☛ IC/facility disaster preparedness and emergency response plan in place. Be prepared to discuss plan with AAALAC Site Visit Team.
- ☛ Plan should include SOPs concerning animal husbandry practices if there are water, feed, and bedding shortages; power outage; chain-of-command in emergencies; manual operation of automatic equipment, and
- ☛ Discuss with appropriate institute administrators the need for funding overnight stays and/or overtime of essential personnel, as well as emergency supplies and equipment necessary for inclement weather and/or emergency situations.
- ☛ Summer HVAC requirements, repairs and inspections.
- ☛ Summer vacation schedules, potential personnel shortages.
- ☛ Y2K issues - is your facility compliant? If questionable, coordinate with DES and schedule training to anticipate and avoid potential problems.
- ☛ Implement a training program for the disaster/emergency response plan.
- ☛ Funding and purchases for emergency equipment and supplies.

TIPS FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TRAINING

- Remember the 5P rule – **Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance**
- All personnel should know location of emergency signs, phone numbers, emergency flashlights, etc.
- All personnel should know how to use the pager system to contact key personnel.
- Each facility should have designated area(s) with prepositioned copies of the institute disaster plan and appropriate SOPs.
- Training should be conducted on a regular basis (once a month for example) – don't forget to record attendance and topics discussed.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ⇒ May 11th: DPAAC – trans-NIH meeting. 10:30-11:30, Bldg 10, Rm 2C310 (Clinical Pathology conference room).
- ⇒ May 20th: APAC meeting, 9:30-12:00, Bldg 14G Conference Room.

!! HELP !!

Your input concerning topics for future issues of the newsletter would be greatly appreciated. There are many topics and issues to discuss on the “emergency preparedness” theme. The DPAAC and OACU look forward to working with you and the NIH COOP in developing a model emergency preparedness plan.

